

PASS 4 - Parent Engagement in Learning, PARCC, and Student Achievement

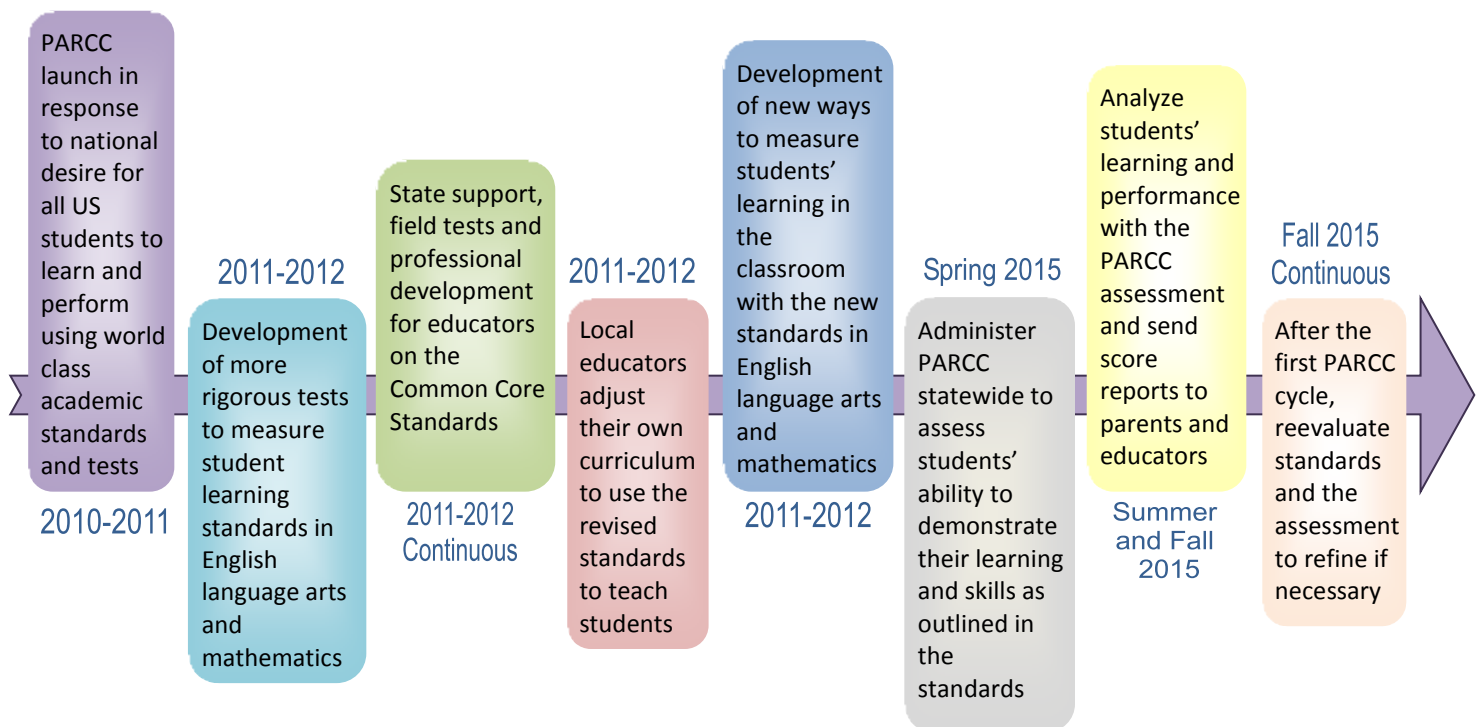
PARCC Assessments Fit into a Larger, Logical Context

The PASS model refers to the term "parent" as any adult who plays an important role in a child's family life.

The New Jersey Department of Education's model of a Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS) is focused on parent information in advancing student learning. PASS 4 documents support the informed engagement of parents as they partner with educators around the measurement of students' learning and the state's annual test - the Partnership for the Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC).

The intent of PASS 4 is to enhance school/home partnerships and opportunities to effectively communicate about student assessment and PARCC 2015. Students can benefit from partnerships of parents and educators who share and consider information about the child's first year of PARCC scores which provide a basis for discussion of the student's progress toward graduation, as well as his or her college and career readiness.

PARCC assessments fit into a larger, logical and more challenging context of 21st century education



PASS 4 is an opportunity for parents and educators to hold partnership conversations using a new baseline for student achievement. PARCC serves to inform parents of their child's progress individually, as compared to the rest of the class, school, district and state. PARCC score reports include data used to create the context for teaching and learning in the classroom and to jointly set high-achieving academic goals for each student. In addition, PARCC score reports provide data and create the necessary transparency to support parents' roles in helping their child succeed.

The underpinnings of PASS 4 are firm: Parents have the option, right and responsibility to collaborate with educators and build partnerships to understand, share and apply their child's performance data as they set achievable and measurable student-centered academic goals.

Key Points to Remember about PARCC

- PARCC assessments measure students' ability to apply and demonstrate their knowledge of concepts rather than memorization of facts.
- The assessment requires students to model mathematical principles and solve problems using critical thinking and mathematical reasoning.
- Students are also required to closely read multiple passages, analyze the passages, perform research tasks and use their skills to write essay responses through using other communication skills.
- The assessments will also provide teachers and parents with information on student progress to inform instruction, provide targeted student support, prepare students for subsequent grades, build entry-level college expectations and prepare for success in the workplace.

Why Assess?

Assessments communicate results and are the core process of gathering information to guide all levels of student education. The process and products of assessment contribute to identifying student assets and needs, determining current levels of student functioning, estimating the rate of progress toward well-defined goals, evaluating and recommending services to accelerate learning, and evaluating program outcomes. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve students' learning through the information it provides.

Assessments can be more valuable than a grade or a score. An assessment can be instructive when teachers use the results to improve/revise instruction and parents use assessment outcomes to support their child. A primary, though often forgotten, purpose of high-quality assessments is to help students learn how to improve their own work and learning strategies. In this information-age when "learning to learn" skills are increasingly important, it is particularly critical that assessments help students reflect on and evaluate their own work. They must be motivated and capable of revising and improving it, as well as seeking out additional resources to answer questions, solve problems or find inspiration to raise the level of their work.

Students can develop these skills when they learn through the use of high academic standards and rigorous assessments that expect them to exhibit their work in presentations made to others, and where they must both explain their ideas or solutions and answer questions about them. Assessments can serve these purposes when students:

- Know what they are going to learn;
- Know how they are going to learn;
- Know how they will be assessed; and
- Know effective ways to practice what they learn.

Assessing student learning is a complex process with a simple goal;
measure what students know and
what they can do with what they know.

The Partnership for the Assessment of College and Career Readiness (PARCC) is the annual state test for all New Jersey students, grades 3 – 11.

Federal education law requires that it is the state's responsibility to administer a statewide assessment program and the state's flexibility waiver did not remove or revise New Jersey's responsibility to annually test its students. In compliance with federal law and state statute (N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-1), the Commissioner of Education, with approval of the State Board of Education, is required to establish a program of standards for graduation from secondary school. Such a program must include, "[t]he development of a Statewide assessment test in reading, writing, and computational skills to be administered to all secondary school pupils..."

In the 2015-16 school year, teaching and learning will be based on the Common Core Standards, and students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills will be measured by the 2014-2015 PARCC assessment.

For additional information on the updates and administration of the PARCC assessment, please visit:
<http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/>

IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR KEY INFORMATION

- **NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:** Provides more details about standards and assessments.
<http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment>
- **UNDERSTANDTHEScore.ORG:** Contains sample PARCC parent score reports, a score report guide, resources for educators and parents, as well as state-specific pages for additional information.
<http://understandthescore.org> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=67G12fhSXmA&feature=youtu.be> (accompanying video)
- **PARCC:** Provides practice tests, sample questions and information regarding the development of the test.
<http://www.parcconline.org>
- **BE A LEARNING HERO:** Provides parent-friendly information and resources on the standards and PARCC tests.
<http://bealearninghero.org>
- **THE HONESTY GAP:** Offers more detailed information about the effects of the honesty gap in New Jersey.
<http://www.honestygap.org/state/new-jersey>
- **DYNAMIC LEARNING MAPS ASSESSMENT:** Contains information regarding the State assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. <http://www.dynamiclearningmaps.org>

Academic assessment is a powerful tool for measuring student learning and the effectiveness of educational programs.

Assessment is not an end in itself, but one vehicle to support student success and enable educational improvement.

For a free recorded general overview of PARCC, register anonymously and hear a recording from the New Jersey Department of Education at <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/2686028106436561665>.

Another recommended free online presentation: A recap of the first year of the PARCC assessment.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcMzOvzp8t4>

*The New Jersey Department of Education's model for home/school partnerships – **The Parent Academy for Student Success (PASS)** provides documents and support tools intended to complement information about the state's academic standards and annual assessments for students. The PASS model provides resources, materials, and opportunities for parents and educators to build home/school partnerships in the best interest of students' academic success. For information on the NJDOE PASS model go to: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/sca/toolkit/>. Please send questions to: informccss@doe.state.nj.us.*